

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
San Antonio Fire Department
MEMORANDUM**

TO: SAFD and PDSD Associates

FROM: Asst. Chief Earl Crayton II, Fire Marshal

DATE: January 2, 2009 (revised)

FILE: Code Interpretation Manual

INTERPRETATION NUMBER CI2006-009

TITLE: Fire Apparatus and Firefighter Access at Exterior Wall Five (5) or Less from a Property Line or Building

CODE EDITION: 2006 International Fire Code (IFC) as amended by COSA

SECTION 503.1.1

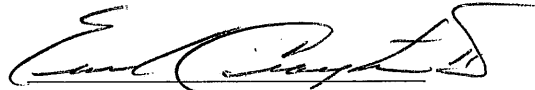
PURPOSE: To clarify whether fire apparatus and/or firefighter personnel access is required at exterior walls or portions of an exterior wall of a building that are five (5) feet or less from a property line or within five (5) feet from an adjacent building on the same lot.

QUESTION: Are fire apparatus access roads and /or firefighter personnel access required at exterior walls or portions of exterior walls of buildings that are five (5) feet or less from a property line or that are within five (5) feet or less from an adjacent building on the same lot? This is questioned due to the fact that the exterior wall provisions of the 2006 International Building Code (IBC) require that these exterior walls be constructed of minimum one-hour fire rated construction with not more than 15% of protected openings. It is argued that this exterior wall fire protection rating and limited allowance for openings in these walls provides the necessary fire protection such that the fire department personnel need not access these exterior walls or portions of exterior walls for fire fighting.

ANSWER: In general, the need for fire lane and fire fighter personnel access is required for all exterior sides of a building as indicated in Section 503.1.1 An "approved route around the building" is defined by the fire department as a minimum five (5) feet clear width.

That being said, there are many factors and/or situations in which a "modification" (see IFC Section 104.8) or an "alternative method" (see IFC Section 104.9) to this requirement is warranted and may be requested through the Fire Marshal. These factors may include, but are not limited to, the following: building use (i.e., occupancy); type of construction; size (building and fire area); height (in feet and number of stories); fire vehicle and personnel access to other portions of the building; fire protection systems; interior floor plan of the building.

Therefore, where a building is proposed to be built with an exterior wall(s) located five (5) feet or less from a property line or five (5) feet or less from an adjacent building on the same lot, the lack of "approved" access as defined above may be approved by the Fire Marshal or his designated representative, on a case by case basis.. If denied, the issue will have to be formally approved by the Fire Marshal via the "modifications" or "alternative methods" process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Earl Crayton II", with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Asst. Chief Earl Crayton II,
Fire Marshal
San Antonio Fire Department**